

Caernarvon Castle

MPBW Official Guidebook | HMSO : 2s 0d [10p]



LOCATION

Caernarvon is near the S.W. of the Menai Strait, 9 miles from Bangor by railway or the A499 road. It is connected by railway with the Llyn promontory, and within a short drive of the Snowdon range by the roads to Llanberis or Beddgelert. The bus terminus is in Castle Square, in sight of the ancient monument. O.S. map No. 106; ref. SH 478627.

SEASON TICKETS, valid for a year, admit their holders to all ancient monuments and historic buildings in the care of the Ministry of Public Building and Works. They cost 15s. (old age pensioners, and children under 15, 7s. 6d.) and can be obtained by writing to the Ministry (AM/P), Lambeth Bridge House, London, S.E.1; at H.M.S.O. bookshops; or at most monuments.

© *Crown copyright 1961*

Published by
Her Majesty's Stationery Office

On sale at the monument

Also obtainable from Her Majesty's Stationery Office at the following addresses:
49 High Holborn, London WC1; 13a Castle Street, Edinburgh EH2 3AR;
Brazennose Street, Manchester M60 8AS; 259 Broad Street, Birmingham 1;
109 St Mary Street, Cardiff CF1 1JW; 50 Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3DE;
7 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8AY; or through any bookseller.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC BUILDING AND WORKS

CAERNARVON CASTLE

CASTELL CAERNARFON

AN ILLUSTRATED SOUVENIR

BY ALAN PHILLIPS M.A., OXON

LONDON

HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

1961: *REPRINTED* 1970



*This book was produced by the
Information Branch of the
Ministry of Public Building and Works*

*The definitive account is given in the
Ministry of Public Building and Works Official Guide Book
CAERNARVON CASTLE AND TOWN WALLS,
obtainable at 3s. at the monument,
Her Majesty's Stationery Office Bookshops,
or from booksellers*



*Landscape by
Richard Wilson*

CAERNARVON CASTLE

Edward the First was the Hammer of the Scots, but left little visible sign of his passage through their country. Though no similar nickname recalls it, he dealt quite as drastically with the Welsh; but in their land the evidence of his rule is monumental. Eight mighty castles sprang up, some of these renowned throughout Europe as masterpieces of military architecture. Flint and Rhuddlan, Aberystwyth and Builth, were all begun in 1277; Caernarvon, Conway, and Harlech in 1283; leaving Beaumaris to complete the set in 1295. Among all these Caernarvon stands somewhat apart. More strongly than at any other the impression abides that it was designed to be both fortress and palace. Why was this so?



Engraving by J. Boydell, showing the castle and town

As usual at the cradle of a popular tradition, fact and legend intertwine. Edward did mark out three new shires in North Wales with Caernarvon as their centre of administration. His son of the same name was born there, almost certainly in the castle precincts, in the year the Statute of Rhuddlan fixed those boundaries, and as a youth was created the first Prince of Wales and endowed with revenues of Crown lands. But whether any promise had been made to the local nobility that there should come to both nations a prince who was born in Wales and could speak no English—that may never be known. It should be noted that young Edward was one of a large family and not even heir to the throne when Queen Eleanor bore



walls, with the Menai Strait and Anglesey flats beyond

him at Caernarvon on St. Mark's day, 25 April, 1284. Royal infants were constantly being presented by consorts to Plantagenet monarchs on their travels. The notion that these events were predetermined cannot be traced in story before the reign of Elizabeth the First, when it was fashionable to flatter the Welsh family of Tudor.

Nevertheless this title of Prince of Wales always since 1301 has been accorded to the eldest son of the sovereign; incidentally, the dignity is not inborn but requires letters patent. In 1911 when it had descended to another Edward there was held for the first time a ceremonial investiture at Caernarvon Castle. Prominent among the King's ministers that day,

Six

Rhuddlan
(1277-1282)



Harlech
(1283-1290)



Beaumaris
(1295-c. 1330)



Edwardian Castles



Flint
(1277-c. 1285)



Caernarvon
(1283-1327)

Conway
(1283-1289)





*Edward I, the founder,
with Queen Eleanor:
sculpture at Lincoln
Cathedral*

indeed his chancellor of the exchequer, was one destined to be M.P. for 55 years for Caernarvon Boroughs, constable of the castle, and, some think, the greatest British statesman of modern times. His name was David Lloyd George, and his statue by Sir William Goscombe John stands in Castle Square on the spot where the crowd assembled to behold their prince. For many later Welsh people the investiture here of Prince Charles on 1st July 1969 was the outstanding occurrence of a generation.

Those who planned the place in the Middle Ages, then, clearly meant it to become the capital of a new dominion and perhaps dreamed of it as the throne of a sub-dynasty. It should accommodate the household of the heir apparent. Antiquarians and travellers have always been aware of its distinctive quality. We note a coincidence when in 1774 we find the visiting Dr. Johnson, usually apt to disparage things not English, calling the castle "an edifice of stupendous majesty and strength", while to the local



Edward II, first Prince of Wales, was born in the castle. This effigy is on his tomb in Gloucester Cathedral

historian Pennant a few years later it is "the most magnificent badge of our subjection".

Caernarvon as a place of habitation had Roman origins. To write that it "ponders on the sea" was poetic fancy of William Watson, but it does touch coast-line of a kind where the river Seiont flows into the Menai Strait. This river no doubt gave its name in the 1st century to the legionary fort of Segontium. In Welsh *y gaer yn arfon* means "the fort in the district of Arfon", that being the land "over against Mon", *i.e.* against Anglesey. There is nothing to be registered for the Dark Ages, but we pause over Hugh Lupus, the Earl of Chester who had come over with William the Conqueror and been rewarded with rich territory. Hugh built a castle on the peninsula formed by the Menai Strait, the Seiont estuary, and the vanished Cadnant brook. Typically Norman, it was raised upon a motte and bailey, in plainer terms a steep mound of turf, like a cone cut off at the top, encircled by a ditch and outside that having earthen banks defended

View of castle and several towers of town wall





Getting ready for a visit by Queen Elizabeth II a month after her coronation

by wooden palisades and another ditch. The pattern of this predecessor should be appreciated before one studies the shape the Edwardian castle took. Norman occupation did not last long, for the Welsh had recovered their lost lands by 1115.

Open warfare waged by Edward the First against the Welsh princes ended in the winter of 1282-83 when Llewelyn the Last was slain and his brother David captured, soon to be executed after a sentence of unprecedented barbarity. Without delay a unified building programme was started at Caernarvon, covering town walls, castle, and quay. The earliest record is of digging out the ditch. Since the English colonists needed protection in their homes, and much of the stone and timber had to arrive by water from Anglesey or Chester as well as from Segontium nearby, it would have been senseless to start on one portion without the others, and indeed in their documentary history the operations and expenses concerning each are not easy to disentangle.

Yet several stages in the construction of the castle do stand out. During 1283-92 it seems that the whole external southern façade and the east end—from Eagle Tower to North-East Tower—was put up to a good height, completing with the town wall a girdle round the settlers. The King and Queen on arrival from Conway in the first summer had only temporary accommodation, but next spring—when Edward the Second was born—they were probably lodged in masonry. Accounts for 1287 reveal large expenditure on piece work, as if the basic plan had been accomplished, and after that the figures decline. John de Havering seems to have been the first governor, at a salary of 200 marks, out of which he was expected to provide for staff in addition to his family.

In 1294 came a shock when another Welsh prince, Madog, suddenly raised a revolt. In Caernarvon he lynched the sheriff, Roger de Puleston, and massacred many citizens. Some of his adherents, while a fair was going on, worked their way into the moat below Eagle Tower, seized the castle, and set its timbers blazing. This made Edward realize that it was as vital to organize defences on the north, where the town lay, as on the sides fringed by water; so another laborious phase followed during 1295-

Landscape by Peter de Wint





Queen's Gate with Lloyd George statue

1301, as a result of which the remaining section clipped in between the town walls, with its towers and King's Gate, was at least standing. Another year of progress is credited to 1304-05, and then, after the final gap in records, comes the period 1309-27 when building went on steadily, though at nothing like the earlier pitch. So over forty years were needed to fulfil the whole design.

The chief architect is reckoned to have been a master mason and military engineer from Savoy called James of St. George, with whose style Edward may have become familiar in the Alps. Walter of Hereford apparently took over direction of works after Madog's rebellion, and was succeeded on his death in 1309 by Henry of Ellerton. The host of architects and engineers, craftsmen and labourers, were as cosmopolitan a crowd as can be pictured, their names indicating that they came from nearly every shire in England and any civilized land in Europe. Some rustic masons were gathered by press-gang methods, so urgent was repair work. Taking the town walls and gates, quay, and castle together, Caernarvon called for an outlay of about £19,000; this can fairly be multiplied by 100 to give



Study by Thomas Girtin

nearly two million pounds in modern equivalent. Only Conway of the eight castles was a costlier undertaking.

With the descendants of Edward the First established in unquestioned rule, and even more when Welsh Tudors were on the throne of England and Wales alike, Caernarvon Castle was allowed to recede from its destiny as the home of a viceroy; nor could its stones tell of many stirring or violent happenings in later centuries. When a mere sixty years old, it was reported to be in a sad state. Through ages of neglect, like an extinct mastodon, the fortress rotted and collapsed, its lead, iron, and glass were pillaged, and eventually it was regarded only as a gaol for debtors and felons.

A few actions and celebrities may be briefly alluded to. Luckless Richard the Second made a circuit of Welsh castles in 1399 while trying to decide whether to rebuff his cousin Henry or grant demands that ultimately encompassed the throne. At Caernarvon, according to a French officer in his train, he had no furniture nor anything but straw to lie on for several nights. Dour Henry the Fourth likewise passed this way on campaign in

The only known portrait of the commander who took the castle in 1646: from ENGLAND'S WORTHIES, by John Vicars



1401, but was sent "bootless home and weatherbeaten back". Owen Glendower, last of the Welsh chieftains, about the same year led an attack with French help that proved vain and cost him 300 men; trying again in 1404 with up-to-date engines of siegecraft, he was repelled by a garrison only 28 strong. "The Frenshemen were makyn all the ordinance that thae mae or can for to assaele the towne of Carnaruan", wrote an officer at Conway; but defence was still supreme.

Prynne the pamphleteer is the best known prisoner. He was here in 1637, fined, branded, deprived of ears; and it was to have been for life, but his Puritan friends flocked to Caernarvon until authority removed him to Jersey. In the Civil Wars the castle was held for Charles the First and taken by a Parliamentary body under Captain Swanley in 1644; it was recovered by the Royalists under Lord Byron next year, only to be surrendered again in 1646 to Major-General Mytton, who then himself had to stand a short siege by Sir John Owen. A warrant for demolition was made out after the Restoration in 1660 but seems not to have been executed; perhaps one glance suggested there was no need to hurry the working of time. In the last century there came a change in outlook: the Commissioners of Woods and Forests inaugurated repairs after





consultation with the expert restorer Salvin, and Sir Llewelyn Turner as deputy constable did further clearance and replacement. Responsibility for the castle as an ancient monument was given in 1908 to the Government Department now called the Ministry of Public Building and Works, which made improvements before the investitures of 1911 and 1969.

Only from within is the castle obviously a ruin. Outwardly from several viewpoints the array of towers, turrets, and gatehouses looks massively composed and brimming with vitality. The brush or pencil of artists from Sandby to Brangwyn has been inspired by it. Most visitors arriving by road or rail will see first Queen's Gate, at the eastern extremity, with the gate passage contained in a gigantic triple round-headed arch. If time allows, they ought to cross the Seiont by the Aber swing bridge and look across at the southern façade along from Queen's Gate past five towers, the last of which, in the west, is Eagle Tower, rather like a rook in a corner of the board at the outset of a game of chess. The towers are mostly octagonal, half of each projecting outwards from the curtain walls. Battlements are crenellated, that is, the upper parts of their parapets have openings from which inmates might watch movements in comparative shelter, or hurl or pour things, while the merlons, those stretches of parapet wall between openings, are frequently pierced with slits for arrows. The infinite variety of points and angles from which somebody could be shooting outwards might well deter an attacker on this side. As to the coloured bands of masonry, the lighter are limestone and the darker sandstone. Ashlar is freely used and finely cut. Mouldings are characteristic of the best Decorated period.

Recrossing the bridge and turning past Eagle Tower, one sees remains of doorways and an arch that formed part of an intended but unfinished water gate. A turn through the opening in the town wall leads past the point where different phases in the building of the castle may be detected; all work westward was done before 1292 and eastward after 1295. This thoroughfare is called Castle Ditch, and here the moat comes into view, a less formidable obstacle than it used to be. Entrance to the castle is through a vaulted passage in the immense and glorious King's Gate. A



A fortress in itself—Eagle Tower



Eagle Tower in moonlight, by Paul Sandby

much defaced figure above the gate is presumably Edward the Second, since it dates from 1320; he is either sheathing or drawing a sword, but as every human expression has long since weathered away, none can say which. We learn that a dozen great iron spikes were placed to keep birds from perching on the royal cranium. A pair of guns on the steps are somewhat incongruous trophies from the Peninsular War.

Clues may be picked up on the perambulation as to why this castle, in its blending of strength and ornament perhaps the supreme creation of Edward and his architect, is yet not typical of the Edwardian plan. The usual system of the time was concentric defence, from inner and outer curtain walls simultaneously; Beaumaris and Harlech show it finely. Caernarvon, like Conway, embodies a single defensive area divided by a cross-wall (here unfinished) into upper and lower wards. One reason was

that the designer's scope was limited by the presence of the old Norman motte already mentioned. Between Chamberlain and Black Towers a change in alignment of the curtain wall was necessitated by this, and here also begins a stone revetment at the base of towers and walls that, continuing eastwards to North-East Tower, shows how the entire upper ward was based on the eminence Earl Hugh had chosen for his stronghold. The other powerful influence is Roman. Edward had been on a crusade, and both along the Mediterranean and in the Holy Land must have noticed castles built to a pattern that had vanished in countries reorganized by the Normans but had survived elsewhere.

So here is this unique monument that has been fortress, palace, or prison and now comes down to us as curiosity, museum, or recreation ground. Shaped like an hour-glass, its walls extend about 200 yards east to west, the area between its boundaries being some three acres. To cover it thoroughly means negotiating eleven staircases, for there are seven major and two minor towers and two double gatehouses; but it is less tiring to go up one tower, along the wall walk, and down another tower. Of the staircases, seven spiral to the right, four to the left. There are three postern gates, all in the lower ward.

Circulation of the wall walk is blocked by each of the towers, but all is accessible in sections. On the south side it was so arranged that bowmen without continually rushing up and down stairs could pass along the walls and round the towers by covered ways. Here it is easy to mistake an exit and come out on some unexpected portion of wall. Below the crenellated ramparts an upper and a lower shooting gallery were contrived. There could thus be a rain of missiles from three levels. Arrow slits were devised ingeniously. One archer could fire at three different angles or three men simultaneously could let fly in different directions. Indeed forty men were supposed sufficient for a garrison in 1284. Another peculiarity popping up in many places is the Caernarvon arch; this strictly is no arch but consists of a flat lintel upon two small corbels instead of coming to a pointed or rounded head. Where stonework looks modern, it was probably part of the renewal in the last century.



*King's Gate with
Well Tower beyond*

It is time to take the visitor round the remains of structures inside the castle, pointing out their individual features. If the tour be taken anti-clockwise, it will start with the lower ward and finish with the upper. There will hardly be time to explore all connecting passages.

King's Gate, now the sole entrance, was defended by a drawbridge, five doors, and six portcullises. Traces of their drawbar holes and grooves may be spotted. In the passage, besides arrow loops and spy-holes, there are the usual machicolations or "murder holes". Beyond it a door on the right admits to a stairway, at the foot of which is a board bearing the names of all Princes of Wales. At first-floor level a modern footbridge leads across the north-west gate tower to the room over the main passage. That this was a chapel has been suggested from the type of windows and signs of a stone basin; and contradicted because two portcullises when raised came through its floor. Fragments survive above this of what should have been a large hall but was never completed; its roof corbels have finely decorated



Above, looking west; below, looking east





The Bishop of Bangor is presented to the Queen by Lord Harlech, 10 July 1953

heads. This makes a good starting point for following the wall walk across the gatehouse to various towers in either direction.

Against the curtain wall west of King's Gate were the kitchens. We see among their relics a trough for the water supply that was piped from a tank in the neighbouring Well Tower, and seatings for a pair of cauldrons with huge hearths beneath them.

Well Tower is entered at the basement, whence all three upper storeys can be viewed as they lie open to the sky. It contained a postern gate, originally guarded with doors, portcullis, and murder holes, whereby supplies could be brought in from the moat. Fireplaces are worth attention, especially that on the first floor with its projecting hood. The well is contained in a rectangular annexe on the east side, sunk about six feet into the black shale on which the castle reposes. We may picture scullions raising buckets and pouring their contents into a lead-lined cistern from which inclined pipes led off through the walls. By means of the well shaft, water could be drawn on the first floor also.



*Prince Charles
presented to the
people by
Her Majesty
the Queen at his
investiture as
Prince of Wales,
1 July 1969*

Should there be time to study only one, the most impressive, grandiose, and ornate of all the interior structures is *Eagle Tower*. "A finer or chaster bit of medieval castellated architecture exists not within the bounds of Britain", thinks D. W. Pughe. Like the keep or donjon of a Norman castle, this was a citadel in itself with its own portcullis and postern. It is 128 feet high and needs 158 steps to reach the top. Central rooms are ten-sided. The basement formed the original entrance for anyone arriving by water. It receives natural light only from one tall slit in the south wall, which is about 18 feet thick. The ground-floor room, approached from the courtyard through a vestibule, contains laid-up colours of the Royal Welch Fusiliers. Doors lead from it to numerous passages and chambers of six or eight sides, often with notable vaulting, hewn within the tower walls and coming to blind ends. One chamber on the south-east side was doubtless a chapel. Largely parallel arrangements are found on the first floor. Here a legend has to be shot down. A tiny chamber on the north is



"Caernarvon arch"

alleged to have been the birthplace of the first Prince of Wales, and indeed the arms of his successors have been inserted in the window. But it is nearly proved that Eagle Tower had not been put up to this height by 1284. In fact it was not finished until about 1316-17, and then it was crowned with three hexagonal turrets, a feature perhaps unique. Two of them now carry flagstaffs, while the westernmost may be climbed by visitors and offers fascinatingly varied glimpses of waterfront through the openings in its battlements. These on all parts of this tower are unrestored and their copings preserve remains of stone embellishments—whether Roman eagles or the helmeted heads of warriors cannot always be told.

Queen's Tower as seen from the courtyard appears to be in the best state of preservation and has been squared off instead of remaining many-angled. Its internal dimensions are much like those of Eagle Tower, but it lacks the fourth storey, and instead of self-contained polygonal chambers within the wall it has continuous passages round its outer sides. Three floors have been adapted to provide a regimental museum for the Royal Welch Fusiliers. The roof turret is the biggest in the castle.

Next comes a stretch of curtain wall which at once completed the lower

ward and formed the south side of the great hall, 100 feet long. A moulded plinth marks where the hall ended on the west, and at the opposite end are steps leading, quite likely from the buttery and pantry, to another postern.

Rather smaller than those visited so far is *Chamberlain Tower*, or *Exchequer Tower*, as older writers call it. On each of three floors it has one octagonal room with a rectangular chamber annexed. It gave direct access to the great hall. The only surviving stone chimney in the castle may be noted on the leads at the back of the turret.

Because it is built against the side of the ancient Norman earthwork, *Black Tower* is smaller than the eye imagines. Its two ten-sided rooms are the narrowest in the castle and are thought to have been much in use as prisons.

Cistern Tower contains a hexagonal chamber with a splendid groined vault, above which is an open tank lined with stone. No doubt its contents would augment the water supply in the two wells of the castle. From this

Part of the Snowdon range, from Mynydd Mawr on the right to Mynydd Craig-Goch on the left. The highest point visible in the centre is Craig Cwm Silyn (2,408 feet)





North-East Tower, Watch Tower, and Queen's Gate

tank a stone channel runs through the wall to discharge by a shaft in Queen's Gate. Reddish masonry inside the stairway to the wall walk is unexpected and pleasing.

Of all components of the castle viewed from inside, the majestic if sparsely ornamented *Queen's Gate*, placed at the highest point, is the easiest to admire on inspection and the hardest to comprehend without using technical terms. One must appreciate that its plan, comprising gate passage, drawbridge pit, and twin flanking towers half projecting from the walls, was imperfectly carried through. Time forbade, so pressing was it in the early days to advance the outer façade here and elsewhere. A railed platform in the outer part of the gate passage overlooks evidence of how the drawbridge worked. More correctly, this one was a turning bridge, like a seesaw, pivoting on a roller, with a pit behind it to receive the counterweight when the bridge was raised. It was here that the Prince of Wales was shown to the people after the investitures of 1911 and 1969, and the present Queen on a visit a month after her coronation. But we





Granary and North-East Towers

should not rest too long before ascending to the battlements, for on the proper day there are a dozen peaks of Snowdonia to be gazed on in their superb and changeful colours.

Watch Tower is complementary to *Cistern Tower* in being a minor erection with one positive feature. Its top was a look-out post and had a penthouse roof to give cover to those on duty. Here and on the adjacent wall walk may be examined traces of the grooves from which wooden shutters or hoards were hung to envelop archers.

Being at the point where the town walls connected with the castle, *North-East Tower* would normally have been designed with an eye to its value in affording a field of flanking fire upon anybody attacking King's Gate. In fact, because of the alignment of walls and the existence of *Granary Tower*, it would have been practically useless for such defence. Few arrow slits were provided, as if this had been realized; and, as an oddity, those in the turret were set not in the merlons but between them. The characteristic wall passages of the south side of the castle terminate in this tower, where ends the extent of building in the period 1283-92.

Granary Tower resembles Well Tower in being octagonal, of four storeys surmounted by a turret, and having on the ground level a passage leading to a well chamber. This well is in a rectangular shaft penetrating about ten feet of shale. The multiple grouping of arrow slits at two levels in the curtain walls on either side of the tower seems more elaborate and lethal than anywhere else except perhaps above King's Gate—to which the wall walk now returns, our starting point regained

*Printed in England for Her Majesty's Stationery Office
by St. Clements Fosh & Cross Ltd., London*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The picture of Edward I and Queen Eleanor is reproduced by kind permission of A. F. Kersting and by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral; that of Edward II by kind permission of H. E. Jones and Son and by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral. The picture of Major-General Mytton was supplied by the British Museum.

For permission to include photographs of works of art, application was made to the National Museum of Wales (Wilson); the Victoria and Albert Museum (de Wint); Norwich Castle Museum (Girtin); Oldham Municipal Art Gallery (Sandby).

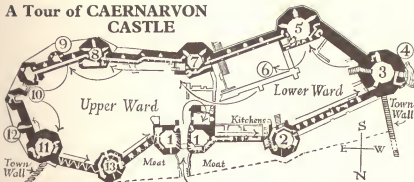
Aerial views on pages 10 and 11 are included by kind permission of Aerofilms, Limited; the picture of the Queen's visit was supplied by the Liverpool Echo; illustrations on pages 13, 28, and 30 came from the National Monuments Record; those on pages 27 and 29 from the British Travel Association; and J. Allan Cash is thanked for the view on page 19.

SOME BOOKS CONSULTED

The authoritative sources are *Caernarvon Castle and Town Walls*, by A. J. Taylor, a Ministry publication, 1953; and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments volume on Caernarvonshire Central, 1960.

BROWN, R. Allen	..	English Medieval Castles	..	..	1954
EDWARDS, J. Goronwy	..	Edward I's Castle-Building in Wales	..	..	1951
GROSE, Francis	..	Antiquities of England and Wales	..	..	1783-97
LLOYD, Sir John	..	Owen Glendower	..	..	1931
MORRIS, John Edward	..	The Welsh Wars of Edward I	..	..	1901
O'NEIL, B. H. St. J.	..	Castles	..	..	1953
PEERS, Sir Charles	..	Caernarvon Castle (article in <i>Transactions of Honourable Society of Cymrodorion</i>)	..	..	1915-16
PENNANT, Thomas	..	Tours in Wales	..	..	1778-81
PUGHE, D. W.	..	History of Caernarvon Castle and Town	..	..	1850
SIMPSON, W. Douglas	..	Exploring Castles	..	..	1957
TAYLOR, A. J.	..	The Birth of Edward of Caernarvon and the Beginnings of Caernarvon Castle (article in <i>History</i>)	..	..	1950
TAYLOR, A. J.	..	The Date of Caernarvon Castle (article in <i>Antiquity</i>)	..	..	1952
THOMPSON, A. Hamilton	..	Military Architecture in England during the Middle Ages	..	..	1912
TOUT, T. F.	..	Edward the First	..	..	1920

A Tour of CAERNARVON CASTLE



Enter at north from Castle Ditch by King's Gate (1), below statue of Edward II. Note traces of drawbridge, five doors, and six portcullises; also arrow loops and "murder holes". Take in individual towers anticlockwise, starting with lower ward. Beyond gate passage turn right, climb stairs, and on first floor cross bridge over gate tower into presumed chapel. Observe grouping and design of arrow slits in wall passages. (From second floor the wall walk (barred) runs above site of kitchens to Well Tower (2).) Descend to courtyard, turn right, and enter basement of that tower, to look up at fine hooded fireplaces. Postern leads to moat. Well chamber at ground level along passage near top of basement steps. Continue alongside wall to Eagle Tower (3). Go down steps to basement, where persons arriving by water entered. A single slit lights basement. Rising to courtyard, pass through vestibule to ground floor. From main room, with colours of Royal Welch Fusiliers, explore passages to chambers with blind ends. Upstairs follow similar arrangements; small chamber has Prince of Wales feathers because formerly thought to be birthplace of Edward II. Climb to roof with three turrets and go up westernmost of these, noting remains of stone eagle (4). Regaining courtyard, enter Queen's Tower (5) and on three floors view museum of Royal Welch Fusiliers. Wall passages in this tower are continuous round outer sides. Further along courtyard lies site of hall (6), with postern to river. Next pass into upper ward. In Chamberlain Tower (7) take staircase to first floor, where another chapel is at N.E., and to top of turret. From this tower eastward, to study windows and arrow slits, vary route between three levels; covered gallery at ground, unroofed passage above, and wall walk behind battlements. They lead through Black Tower (8), with small ten-sided rooms; Cistern Tower (9), with stone tank; and so to Queen's Gate (10), where from railed platform traces of turning bridge may be examined. Climb to battlements, cross over gate, and return to courtyard behind unfinished gatehouse. Enter North-East Tower (11), go over turret, and back along wall walk to Watch Tower (12); here are grooves from which shutters hung to protect archers. Exit through North-East Tower again. In Granary Tower (13) follow passage at ground level to another well chamber, then go up for the last time to complete wall walk along to room over King's Gate, and so down through Well Tower.

CASTELL CAERNARFON HANES Y CASTELL

Dechreuwyd adeiladu Castell Caernarfon ym 1283 ar safle Normanaidd a berthynai i'r cyfnod c. 1090, ac nid oeddent wedi gorffen ei adeiladu pan roisant y gorau i weithio arno tua 1330. Fe'i cynlluniwyd gan Edward I i gadarnhau ei fuddugoliaeth trwy Llywelyn I Fywys Cymru a Dafydd ei frawd ac i wasanethu fel canolfan seremonïol linach frenhinol Lloegr a fyddai'n llywodraethu Ewrop o hyn allan.

O'r cychwyn cyntaf fel i briwadiwyd i fod yn symbol yn ogystal ag adeilad milwrol. Yn ôl traddodiad llafar a ymgorfforwyd yn rhannant Maeslen Wledig, fe geir dolen sy'n cysylltu Caernarfon a Rhufain. Yn y chwedl honno sonnir am Ymerawdwr o'r gorffennol pell yn ymweld â gwlad fyfnyddig, ac yno ar aber rhyw afon fe welodd ddinas gaerog a chastell mawreddog a'i dyddu o bwr lliw. Yn ffridiol y creodd Edward dref a chastell fel y rhain a charient na'i nodweddiad arbennig ddinas Ymerodrol Caerystennin—y tyrau amlochrog yn frenhinol a chylch o gerrig llw o'u cwmpas. Yr oedd hyd yn oed 'Borth Aur' yn y dref newydd, a Phorth yr Aur y gelwir ei hyd heddiw gan Gymry Cymraeg Caernarfon.

Er i'r Brenin ei gynllunio'n balas tywysog ni fu'r un tywysog yn byw yno erioed. Yng Nghaernarfon yn siwr llawn y ganwyd y Tywysog Edward, a hynny fwy na thebyg mewn lleth pren ar safle'r adeiladu oedd yn dechrau cael eu codi y pryd hwnnw. Chwiban mlynedd yn ddiweddarach y defnyddiwyd y castell fel ei briwadiwyd pan gynhaliwyd seremoni arwisgo Tywysog Edward arall yng Nghaernarfon ym 1911. Yn hanesyddol rhaid mai yn Rhuddlan y cwrddodd y Brenin a'r Cymry ac addo iddynt "dywysog a anwyd yng Nghymru, na fedrai air o Saesneg ac na allai undyn bardduo ei fuchedd na'i sgwrs." Cyfiriol yr oedd wrth gwsr at y baban, y Tywysog Edward o Gaernarfon.

ADEILADAU A NODWEDDION ARBENNIG

Porth y Brenin—y brif fynedfa i'r castell, ac uwch ei phen y mae cofglofn Edward II a godwyd ym 1320 a'r blynyddoedd yn gadael eu holl yn drwm iawn arni. Mae nodweddion manwl ac amddiffynfoll rhoddy'r porth yn eithaf clir. Dyma bwl y bont, ac ar hwn y troai colwyn y bont, dyma rigolau'r pyrrhewlls, yst y pyrrh a'r "tyllau llofruddio" uwchben. Ni orffenwyd cefn tŷ'r porth.

Tŵr yr Eryr—Hwn yw'r tŵr mwyaf yn y castell. Y mae ynddo bedwar llawr heb gyfrif i'r un o dan y daear. Ar ben un tŵr yd y mae cryr carreg. Yn y cyfrifon adeiladu am 1316-1317 ceir sôn manwl am osod yr eryr yn ei le. Yn ôl traddodiad yma y ganwyd y Tywysog Edward o Gaernarfon, stori sy'n mynd nôl mor bell â 1724 beth bynnag, ond yn ôl y cofnod hanesyddol mae'n anhebyg i'r tywysog gael ei eni yn y tŵr a safi yma heddiw.

Porth y Frenhines—Fe saif 40 troedfedd yn uwch nag arwynebedd y tir y tu allan oherwydd fe ymgorfforir yn y pen hwn o'r castell y safle Normanaidd cynnar. Os codwyd un o gwbl, ar hyd ramp hir mae'n siwr y rhedai'r ffordd at y fynedfa. Ni orffenwyd adeiladu cefn tŷ'r porth, ond yr oedd yna borth allanol a phont dro fel yr un ym Mhorh y Brenin. Ar y balconi a godir yn arbennig ar amgylchiad brenhinol y safle y Brenin neu'r Tywysog fel y gall y Cymry sydd wedi ymgynnull ar Sgwâr y Castell ei weld.

Tŵr y Gwylwr—Gellir cyrraedd brig y tŵr hwn, y teneuaf yn y castell, o lwybr y mur. Ar yr amddiffynfeydd gerllaw, fe wellr y rhogolau lle troai'r cloriau pren i amddiffyn y saethyddion. Yn ymgydd y safle'r gŵl hwnnw a'i ugwern, y sonir amdano yng nghyfrifon y gwaith am 1319 a 1320 i seinio'n ddyddiol yr amserau i ddechrau a gorffen gweithio.

Tyredau, amddiffynfeydd, rhoddydd fel y muriau ac agennau'r saethyddion. Y mae deg tŵr yn y castell, ac y mae'r rhan fwyaf ohonynt a'i llywbrau amddiffynol ar hyd y muriau a'r rhoddydd fel y muriau yn agored i'r cyhoedd. Oherwydd y llywbrau a'r rhoddydd, fe allai'r milwyr symud yn gyflym o un tŵr ac o agennau'r llywbrau i'r lall ac anelu i unrhyw feirddad ar unwaith. Cynlluniwyd yr agennau saethu yn y mur ar bob ochr i Dŵr y Granari fel y gallai trî gŵr saethu yn yr pryd o unrhyw un ohonynt, neu un gwr drwy unrhyw ddau ohonynt.

Fynhonnau, dŵr, glendid. Y mae dwy fynnon yn y castell un i bob ward, ac yn Nhŵr y Seston a adawyd heb ei orffen, fe adeiladwyd tanc dai dŵr allan. Mae'n ystyglloedd yn y muriau y darparwyd lleoedd ymolchi eith. i'r milwyr, a châr'r carthion eu cario oddi yno trwy gwtteri serth yn y muriau i ffos y castell neu i'r afon.

GOLYGFYDD

Golygfa gan Boydell o'r gogledd ddyddrwy ym 1750. O ffordd Pwllheli gyferbyn ag olion y gaeir Rufeinig Isaf—golygfa gan Richard Wilson tua 1750. O lan Afon Sciout a throes y bont—golygfa gan William Pars tua 1770.

